

Follansbee

Last Update:

August 2002

EPA Region 3

West Virginia

Brooke County

1/4 mile from Follansbee

EPA ID# WVD004336749

1st Congressional District

Other Names:

Koppers Disposal Site
Coketown

Koppers Chemical Co.
Koppers Industries, Inc.
Wheeling Pittsburgh
Steel

Current Site Status

On June 26, 2000, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conditionally approved the environmental study, called a RCRA Feasibility Investigation (RFI), subject to additional sediment sampling by Beazer East, one of the companies potentially responsible for the contamination. The river sediment sampling was completed in January 2001. Additionally, Beazer East will submit an interim measures program report regarding the performance of the shallow groundwater pump-and-treat system.

The facility is currently owned and operated by Koppers Industries, Inc. Currently, EPA is working with Koppers Industries to oversee its commitment to implement the best pollution prevention and waste

minimization practices. EPA has identified this implementation as necessary to accomplish an effective clean-up program. This facility presents a unique challenge in that the current owner and the party responsible for the clean up are different.

Site Description

The Follansbee site located in Brooke County, West Virginia, is a 26-acre operating coal tar processing plant. The site consists of process and storage facilities for the manufacture of coal tar by-products. Contamination at the site is potentially high due to leaking tanks, spills, surface impoundments, and poor operation practices. The site is underlain by three formations (a Perched Zone, an Alluvial Aquifer and a Bedrock Aquifer), all three formations are contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene and toluene, heavy metals, and as much as 7 feet of DNAPL was detected in one bedrock well and 6 feet of DNAPL in one Alluvial Aquifer well. There are an estimated 5,900 people living within a 3-mile radius of the site. Follansbee obtains potable water from a radial collector well and a surface water intake located approximately one mile downstream of the facility. Fifty private residential water supply wells are within the three-mile radius, and there are public wells located five miles downstream that may be affected by this site.

Site Responsibility

Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the Federal and State governments, and the parties potentially responsible for the site contamination.

NPL Listing History


This site was proposed to the National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites requiring long term remedial action on December 30, 1982. The site was formally added to the list September 8, 1983, making it eligible for federal cleanup funds.

Threats and Contaminants

EPA determined that human exposure to the contaminated soils is under control because the facility is largely paved and secured.

Koppers industries developed and submitted a plan to EPA in February 1998 to increase the amount of paved area at the facility. The facility also provides for full-time security staff, which limits access to the property. EPA's determination is based on the assumption that institutional controls will continue indefinitely.

Contaminants in the groundwater include PAHs, VOCs such as benzene and toluene, DNAPLs, and metals. Surface water springs and riverbank seeps are contaminated with phenols. Potential health risks exist from drinking or coming in direct contact with contaminated groundwater and surface water. The Ohio River could be a threat to those who use it for recreational purposes or as a source for domestic water supplies. However, the effect of the site on the Ohio River has yet to be assessed.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html> 

Cleanup Progress

EPA conducted a field investigation at the site in 1982, resulting in its inclusion on the National Priority List (NPL). In 1983, the potentially responsible party (PRP), Beazer East, installed a trench to intercept contaminated groundwater. The groundwater is pumped to the on-site wastewater treatment facility. The PRP installed a second pump in an attempt to prevent the contaminated groundwater from reaching the Ohio River, as well as to control the groundwater flow.

A Consent Decree (CD) was signed in August 1984, between the EPA and the PRPs with the State of West Virginia as intervener. The CD called for: paving of a portion of the property; installation of five recovery wells to eliminate seepage to the coal pits and to prevent future groundwater contamination; and for the PRPs to conduct an alluvial aquifer study. On September 27, 1990, the PRPs and EPA signed an AOC, placing site cleanup responsibility under the RCRA program. Pursuant to the 1990 CO, Beazer East was required to complete a RCRA Facility Investigation (RFI) and a Corrective Measures Study (CMS). The objective of the RFI was to develop a technically sound Site Conceptual Model and to complete a risk

assessment. This information will be used to identify necessary corrective actions for which applicable remedial technologies will be evaluated in the CMS.

In October 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Consent Order (CO) to Beazer East, the former owner of the facility, to conduct a site clean-up investigation. Beazer East is operating two interim programs to control groundwater migration: (1) the first program, installed in 1983 by a previous owner, involves the operation of the five groundwater recovery wells to provide hydraulic containment for portions of the shallow perched zone aquifer; (2) the second program, known as the interim Dense Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid (DNAPL) removal program, was initiated in April 1999 to collect coal tar product from the bed rock with one recovery well.

In October, 1992, EPA approved the RFI work plan. Beazer East has been conducting the RFI in a phased approach, which resulted in the submission of a comprehensive RFI Report in 1994 and again in 1996. EPA provided technical comments on these reports. EPA then commented on the October 1996 RFI report identifying numerous deficiencies in health and ecological risk assessments. Beazer East responded to these comments by performing additional field programs to better characterize the site and to evaluate certain identified gaps. These programs have included the installation of additional wells, performance of additional sampling and analysis, and evaluation of the existing shallow zone pump-and-treat system.

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The detailed Administrative Record can be examined at the following location:

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